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Faster is the new fast -- just ask the mayor

Mandel chides EEDC for report delays

The Edmonton Journal

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Mayor Stephen Mandel surprised a lot of people -- almost 500 to be exact -- by publicly chiding Edmonton Economic Development Corp. CEO Ron Gilbertson last week.

Speaking to a business crowd at TEC Edmonton's VenturePrize awards for fledgling companies, Mandel said he'd been waiting for weeks for a report on regional commercialization from EEDC.

Gilbertson kept telling him it was coming, but he still hadn't seen it, an obviously frustrated Mandel said.

TEC Edmonton is a joint venture between EEDC and the U of A, so Gilbertson was at the event.

EEDC said later they had no comment, and would prefer if Mandel explained his actions. Mandel's deputy chief of staff Brad Stromberg said the comments were made in a "fun-spirited way" and meant as a joke.

Meanwhile, keynote speaker Jim Carroll, the futurist who has advised such huge corporations as Disney, said that faster is the new fast if you want to be successful these days.

"The markets are shifting at a furious rate, and we have to get rid of slow, ponderous methodology. New technologies are emerging faster than ever before, and you have to look at the market and do something different."

"The average Wii is on the shelf for less than an hour. It's turned the industry upside down, and that's innovative thinking."

Perhaps Carroll's most sobering observation was that seven out of 10 children currently in kindergarten will go into careers that don't yet exist.

LEARNING TO RELAX

Stantec CEO Tony Franceschini is wondering what he's going to do with his time when he retires next spring.

"I haven't had time to think about it because I have a 24/7 job. To be honest, I'm a little apprehensive because I haven't had time to have hobbies. I golf a bit, but I'm going to have to develop some new interests."

One thing he will be doing is spending more time with his family after 10 years as

CEO of the thriving engineering firm.

"The thing that gets to me is all the travel, especially when your head office is in Edmonton. It really takes a toll on your family."

EATING LOCALLY

Locavore, a person who seeks out locally produced food, was chosen 2007's word of the year by The New Oxford American Dictionary.

And serving locavores has become big business for the 162 members of Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association, who sell everything from alpaca wool to zucchini at the farm gate or at farmer's markets.

Alberta Agriculture has produced an online map that locates them all by region or product (go to www.agric.gov.ab.ca and click on Maps), or you can get a free paper guide from the association at 1-800-661-2642.

SUCCESS STARTS YOUNG

Two U of A medical researchers and a company president have been named among Canada's Top 40 Under 40.

Edmonton native Court Carruthers, president of industrial and safety supply company Acklands-Grainger, received the award for a strategy that resulted in a 170-per-cent increase in operating earnings last year.

Jason Dyck, director of the university's cardiovascular research group, and Atul Humar, director of transplant infectious diseases, also made the list, which is managed by The Caldwell Partners.

"Both men embody the pioneering spirit of researchers capable of making discoveries and developing medical treatments that will better patient care," Dean of Medicine Tom Marrie said.

HERE AND THERE

Craig Warnock, currently executive VP and treasurer at ATB Financial, fills the new position of city chief financial officer and treasurer May 20. City manager Al Maurer says the unprecedented growth and increasing need for municipal services made it important to have someone to focus on long-term fiscal planning. ... The Hong Kong-Canada Business Association has its annual forum on doing business in Hong Kong June 2 at Shaw. HKCBA is one of Canada's largest bilateral trade associations with more than 1,300 members in eight Canadian cities. Info at www.hkcba. com/canhkforum. ... An Alberta delegation will travel to Leeds and London, England, on June 21 to the Opportunities Canada Expo 2008 recruiting fair. Edmonton Economic Development Corp. is hosting an information meeting today from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. for Edmonton companies interested in joining the trip. It's in the EEDC boardroom, third floor of the World Trade Centre. Call 917-7643.

Jordan Singer, president of Henry Singer Fashion Group has been named Alberta's Marketer of the Year by Venture magazine for re-branding the iconic menswear retailer. Since joining the family business in 2002, he's opened four new locations in Edmonton and Calgary, ventured into women's clothing and increased sales by 52 per cent.

Executive recruitment firm TC Hunter & Associates is opening an office in Calgary. The company's oil and gas engineers and trades overseas recruiting division, TC Hunter

International, will also operate out of the new office. "We feel it's time to be a lot closer to our clients in Calgary and offer both our candidates and clients a more personal touch," says Trevor Mahl, president of the Sherwood Park company ... Corporate Knights magazine has picked Planet Organic Markets as the top organic food retailer in Canada. "I believe it's a result of our firm decision to support organic agriculture, and the dedicated team of people who work at Planet and keep our commitment strong," president Mark Craft says ... Cohos Evamy received top honours at the Antron Carpet Fiber Design Awards for its work at PCL Construction's Centennial Learning Centre.

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